

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6813

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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SUBJECT: IRAQI VISIT TO MALTA

REF: VALLETTA 0629

1. MAY 19-21 VISIT TO MALTA BY IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT
TAHA MUHYDDIN MA'ROUF PRODUCED LITTLE BEYOND USUAL WELL-
PUBLICIZED MEETINGS WITH GOM OFFICIALS AND TOURS OF
VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS. MA'ROUF LEFT MALTA SEVERAL
HOURS BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF COLONEL QADHAFI, SO THAT
"RUMORED" MEETING BETWEEN MA'ROUF AND QADHAFI CONCERNING
LEBANON (REFTEL) DID NOT TAKE PLACE.

2. IRAQI VISIT WAS IN RECIPROCATION OF PREVIOUS TRIPS
TO BAGHDAD BY PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF AND OTHER GOM
OFFICIALS. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT IRAQI DELEGATION WAS
EN ROUTE HERE FROM OTHER OFFICIAL VISITS AND WAS PREVAILED
UPON TO STOP OVER IN MALTA IN ORDER TO HELP MINTOFF IN
HIS RE-ELECTION COMAPIGN. ONLY TANGIBLE RESULT OF VISIT
APPEARS TO BE AN AGREEMENT BY IRAQ TO SEND AN
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"ECONOMIC DELEGATION" BACK TO MALTA IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO

DISCUSS THE FURTHERANCE OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

3. THE OFFICIAL JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE GOM
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE VISIT WAS AS FOLLOWS:

"ON THE INVITATION OF PRIME MINISTER DOM MINTOFF,
H.E. MR. HAHHA MUHYIDDIN MA'ROUF, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF IRAQ, ACCOMPANIED BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN
TRADE OF IRAQ AND SEVERAL OTHER HIGH OFFICIALS PAID AN
OFFICIAL VISIT TO MALTA FROM THE 19TH TO THE 21ST MAY, 1976.

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE MINISTER HAD TWO
MEETINGS. THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE HELD IN A VERY WARM
AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE COVERED BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF
MUTUAL INTEREST TO BOTH COUNTRIES. THE TWO SIDES REAFFIRMED
THE FRIENDSHIP THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THEIR PEOPLE AND THE
TWO COUNTRIES.

THE TWO PARTIES RECOGNISED THEIR COMMON APPROACH TO
VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND
AGREED TO CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS ON MATERS RELATED TO
THE UNITED NATIONS, UNCTAD, THE GROUP OF 77 AND THE
NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT. THEY REAFFIRMED THEIR BELIEF THAT
THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT
IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FORTHCOMING SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES
DUE TO BE HELD IN COLOMBO IN AUGUST 1976 THE TWO SIDES
PLEDGED THEIR FULL SUPPORT TO THE CONFERENCE AND TO
ENSURE ITS SUCCESS.

IN THE ARAB SPHERE, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF IRAQ TOOK UP THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM WHICH
IS A FOREMOST PROBLEM ACCORDED UPPERMOST IMPORTANCE BY
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ. HE RAISED THE PROBLEM
OF THE ZIONIST OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE AND THE EXPANSIONIST
NATURE OF THE ZIONIST AGGRESSION AGAINST THE ARAB NATION.
HE STRESSED IRAQ'S REJECTION OF ALL SETTLEMENT PLANS IN
THE ARAB AREA INASMUCH AS THOSE PLANS IGNORE THE SUBSTANCE
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OF THE PROBLEM WHICH IS THE RIGHT OF THE ARAB PALESTINIAN
PEOPLE TO REGAIN THEIR HOMELAND, TO EXERCISE THE RIGHT OF
SELF-DETERMINATION AND TO REGAIN THEIR FULL SOVEREIGNTY
OVER PALESTINE.

THE PRIME MINISTER OF MALTA REAFFIRMED HIS GOVERNMENT'S
CONSTANT SUPPORT FOR ARAB UNITY AND FOR THE FULL RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO THEIR HOMELAND, AS WELL AS

THE NECESSITY OF EUROPEAN-ARAB COOPERATION. THE IRAQI
SIDE APPRECIATED MALTA'S SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE.

THE TWO SIDES REVIEWED THE TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND AGREED THAT MORE DETAILED
DISCUSSIONS SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT THE LEVEL OF EXPERTS,
INCLUDING THOSE FROM THE IRAQI FOREIGN DEVELOPMENT FUND,
TO DRAW UP THE OUTLINE OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION.
THE IRAQI SIDE REITERATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO SEND AN
ECONOMIC DELEGATION TO MALTA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO
PROMOTE TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES.

VICE PRESIDENT MA'ROUF EXPRESSED HIS SINCERE THANKS
AND WARM APPRECIATION OF THE CORDIAL WELCOME
AND FRIENDLY HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO HIM AND TO HIS
DELEGATION."

4. COMMENT: MALTESE ENDORSEMENT OF PRO-ARAB POLICIES
CONCERNING PALESTINE IS STANDARD FOR MINTOFF, AND IS
CONSISTENT WITH HIS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM ARAB
ASSISTANCE FOR THE MALTESE ECONOMY. ALTHOUGH THE IRAQI
VISIT WAS GIVEN MAXIMUM EXPOSURE BY THE PRO-MINTOFF MEDIA,
IT WAS QUICKLY ECLIPSED BY THE ARRIVAL OF COLONEL QADHAFI
(SEPTEL). WIGGINS

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